

CSA Newsletter, Week 9 of 20

August 06, 2007

This is a Healthy Alternative 'A' week.

Farm Report

by Farmer Tim

Greetings from Erehwon! Here is an unbelievable story from the Konen Farm. At 3 a.m. on Saturday morning Mike and his family were wakened by the sound of a speeding car crashing into one of their trees. At some point a helicopter was called to transport a critically wounded occupant but was deployed to use its searchlights to search for a possible fourth occupant that might have been thrown from the vehicle. While circling around Mike's house, the helicopter's engine died and the helicopter crashed into one of Mike's empty flight pens, luckily missing the house and the pen where Mike's chickens are residing. Rescue vehicles dealing with this second incident drove through one of Mike's small fields flattening all of the cucumber plants and some of the tomatoes. The good news is that the corn is still okay. Mike has done a great job of providing organically grown produce for our CSA this year and we wish him the best in this trying time. If you would like to communicate with him, his email is lm_konen@yahoo.com.

We took some time to rest on Sunday and read through some old issues of *Organic Gardening and Farming Magazine* from the '60's and '70's. It is fascinating to read how passionate the editors, writers, and readers were about following organic methods. A common theme was the extensive use of mulch everywhere in the garden and building the health of the soil. Several articles mentioned the value of adding compost in the fall so earthworms could work on it through the fall and winter and early spring making nutrients available to the first crops. Most gardeners described great results from the addition of compost, a winter cover of mulch to help the worms keep working on the compost, and no other additions to the soil.

There seemed to be three distinct periods which heavily influenced the articles. In the early sixties, most of the articles were written by or were describing very experienced gardeners who had been growing organically for many years. In the late sixties and early '70's many of the articles were about much younger people (lots of long hair in those pictures!) who were moving back to the land and rediscovering the joys of becoming self sufficient on a plot of land. In the late '70s the focus shifted toward innovate ways to use wind, water, and solar energy to power the farm. Anyway, there is a wealth of knowledge in these magazines and we'll keep a stack of them in the store for you to read when you come to the farm or to take home to read if you like.

On Wednesday our great crew of volunteers came out to help harvest, prepare planting beds and transplant seedlings. Steve Trisko, Chuck Wettergreen, and Robin Migalla transplanted at least a thousand seedlings. Candy Crawford came out in the afternoon while her girls were at farm camp and work with Robin, who apparently doesn't have enough sense to come in out of the sun and 90+ degree heat, to finish up the job. Jenny Gresko came out and harvested tomatoes in the hoophouse at Mongerson and pulled out all the expired bean plants. Thanks for your help! As

some of our helpers leave to go back to school, we welcome anyone who could come out to work for an hour or more. We have more to seed in trays, more to transplant outside and then we will be filling up the hoop house with fall crops. We are working hard to develop effective and efficient ways to get the work done and hope to get the operation to a positive cash flow by the end of the season.

One project we are working on is this: How can we get spinach seeds to germinate during hot weather? We were pretty successful at germinating seeds in our Christmas-light driven warm boxes (3 strings of lights in an insulated box keeps seeds at a toasty 80 degrees when the barn temperature is 20 degrees) but a reliable system for keeping seeds cool enough in hot weather has eluded us. This week we will dig a foot-deep bed in a shady spot, surround it with straw bales and cover it with the insulated lid from the warm box to see if we can get the temperature down to seventy or so. This idea is really an extension of the system used by Bucky the Farm Dog to cool off on hot days. He finds a shady spot, scratches out a depression in the soil, turns around two or three times (we're not sure of the purpose of this move!) and then lies down. Works for him and we're hopeful it works for spinach too!

We continue to receive enough moisture for most crops and irrigating has been kept at a minimum. We are moving as much small vegetable production as we can from Mongerson to HPM to take advantage of better soil conditions and have nearly completed planting crops at HPM in the area north of the hoop house. It looks good with few weeds and we hope to keep it that way. If you walk out to that area, note how thickly we are planting lettuce and some other crops. The object is to have as much of the bed covered with leaf canopy to shade the baby weeds and to keep the soil cool. Thanks to all who are bringing materials for us to compost at HPM. We are tilling everything in, bio bags and all into one of the beds and we can see the soil beginning to improve. We just made a second planting of squash on that spot and are looking forward to seeing the results.

We Get Mail

Hi Beth, Tim and all: I had a question that I've been meaning to ask for years....would it be possible to have a swap box option for pick-up subscribers? I realize that we get a greater range of choices versus drop-off subscribers, and I suspect that is why they have a swap box option and we don't. However, I also see you working to try to reduce overall farm share waste and I suspect that this may be a part of the problem. I know that there are some veggie varieties that just don't get eaten in our home. When these are a part of our weekly share I know that they will likely go to waste, and that makes me sad. Surely someone out there might want to give our radishes or sweet peppers a loving home in exchange for their kale or kohlrabi. Maybe this could be an option for pick-up too? Perhaps with a limit that only one item can be swapped out per week or something, but maybe there's a workable solution. Just a thought. -Corrie Goldberg

Hi Corrie, It's a good thought and we'll try it on Wednesday and Friday this week. tf

Hi Tim and Beth, I just wanted to make a suggestion for those that have too many of something in their box or things they don't want. We have a "Giving Garden" drop off site at the Milton

Township food pantry on Main St., in Wheaton. Last week I took the cucumbers, as well as quite a few from my own garden, and the cabbage and dropped them off. The people there were very excited and happy to be getting more produce in. This is a great opportunity for those in the community who need fresh produce to get some right from the food pantry. I know in many of the surrounding communities there are similar programs. Just a thought!! Shannon Ensing

Thanks, Shannon. We've tried a couple of times to find an outlet for extra produce at food pantries but have not found too much interest in fresh produce from the management. Sounds like you have discovered an exception! We often have day-old produce from the store that ends up going to the animals but if we can give to people, so much the better. I'll contact you and see if we can work something out. tf

Volunteer Days

We are scheduling two special volunteer days for this fall in conjunction with subscriber potlucks.

On Saturday, September 15, we plan on harvesting the bulk of the winter squash. (We may harvest some small quantities prior to that, but this is when we will harvest the bulk of it.) Volunteers will meet for lunch at Heritage Prairie and then caravan down to the Konen Farm to harvest squash. Around 4:00 the caravan will head back to Heritage Prairie, where we will be setting up for another Subscriber/Farmer potluck. The Volunteers do not need to bring a dish to pass—their sweat and sore muscles will be their contribution—but if they wish to do so, they can leave them at HPM while they harvest. The potluck will begin at 4:30 and end around 7:30. You do not need to volunteer in order to attend the potluck. In fact, those hungry volunteers will need lots of hearty food to feed the hearty appetites they will have worked up harvesting squash. Squash harvesting is a good family activity, but possibly physically difficult for smaller children.

Then, on Saturday, October 06, we will have a similar event for harvesting pumpkins and ornamental gourds. Gourds are small, and we also have a lot of mini pumpkins, so this might be a very good activity in which to involve smaller children.

CSA Produce Forecast

by Farmer Tim

This week's offerings:

Well, obviously, no cucumbers, not unless we can get an alternate supply. But we still have plenty of potatoes, corn, tomatoes, summer squash, and lettuce. This week and next week everyone will get garlic. There are also some peppers, eggplants, Swiss Chard, and other greens for Veggie Lovers.

Future offerings:

Later plantings of broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage are still a few weeks away. Carrots and beets are also a couple of weeks away. This week we will make an assessment of the various winter squashes. Acorn and spaghetti squashes are the earliest to mature and are usually ready to harvest in mid to late August. Cross your fingers.

Heritage Prairie Happenings

by Beth Propst

Feast on the Farm.

The next Feast on the Farm is scheduled for August 23. The menu will probably be similar to the planned menu for the July feast, since we didn't get a chance to use that one. To sign up, see Sarah in the store or visit Moveable Feast in Geneva. The last one of the season is scheduled for October 12.

Dishing it Out

Last Thursday's cooking class was well attended and a great success. It was the first in a series that is planned for the first Thursday of the month. The next event will be on September from 6:00-7:00 pm. The subject will be The ABC's of School Menu Planning. More details will be available later.

Pages from Grandma Beth's Cookbook

by Beth Propst

Recipes on www.hpmfarm.com

Thank you to those of you who have added recipes to the recipe forum.

<http://www.hpmfarm.com/?p=cfbbs&a=forum.view&fid=11>

Anyone who has an account can post a recipe. Go to the website and click on "get an account" to get an account. Once you have completed the form, the web site will send you a password almost immediately. Depending on your security systems, this might go to your junk mail folder so check that folder if it doesn't show up in your regular mail folder within 10 minutes. (Once you log in with this password you can change your password by going to the profile section and changing your password.) Anyone who is logged in can post on the forums.

The World's Healthiest Foods

For those of you who have never visited this web site it is a wonderful source of information about foods. For each of the foods listed—and it is a mix of all foods, not just vegetables—they provide a description, information on nutrient value and health benefits, a history, instructions on selecting and storing, eating and food preparation ideas, and additional references. Click on the link for recipes and you go to a wonderful recipe website that lets you select ingredients to include and exclude and then finds recipes using those ingredients.

The George Mateljan Foundation, a non-profit organization free of commercial influence, provides the website free of charge. Their purpose is to provide unbiased scientific information about how nutrient-rich World's Healthiest Foods can promote vibrant health and energy and fit your personal needs and busy lifestyle.

Tomatillos

Some of you received tomatillos last week. For those of you who have never heard of a tomatillo, it is a small, spherical and green or green-purple fruit surrounded by a paper-like husk formed from the calyx. As the fruit matures, it fills the husk and can split it open by harvest. The husk turns brown, and the fruit can be any of a number of colors when ripe, including yellow, red, green, or even purple. (Ours are mostly yellow.) Tomatillos are the key ingredient in fresh and cooked Latin American green sauces. The tomatillo is closely related to the ground cherry and the ornamental Chinese Lantern plant and, more distantly, to the tomato.

There will continue to be tomatillos available, with a larger quantity as the season progresses. Later in the season Tim likes to make up salsa kits. He usually includes recipes in those kits, but for those who want to get started right now, here is Tim's own recipe.

Farmer Tim's Tomatillo Salsa

Serve this tangy salsa with grilled chicken or pork.

- 1 pound tomatillos, husks removed, washed and quartered (about 14 medium)
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and quartered
- 1 chili or serrano pepper, deveined and seeded
- 1/2 cup cilantro leaves
- juice of 1 lime, about 2 tablespoons juice

Boil (I like to roast my toms and peppers) quartered tomatillos in water for 5 to 7 minutes, until tender. Drain and cool. Place all ingredients in blender or food processor and purée until smooth. Place in tightly covered container and store in refrigerator for up to 1 week. Serve with grilled chicken, pork, or fish. Makes about 2 cups of tomatillo salsa.

Beth, Tim, Bronwyn, and Bob

P.S. Please email us with questions, comments, suggestions, recipes, and we will include them in future newsletters. We really hope to get a lot of recipes so that in a year or two we can create the Heritage Prairie Market Cookbook.

All newsletters will be posted on the HPM web site in the Forums section by 8:00 Monday morning.

If you need to contact us during the week, please call the Heritage Prairie Market phone (630-715-5475), Beth's cell phone (630-485-9964) or Tim's cell phone (630-485-9963). E-mail works if you do not have an immediate need, but response may take 24-48 hours during busy times. Thanks.

Farm Camp 2007

Heritage Prairie Market and Education Center

2N308 Brundige Road
Elburn, IL 60119

Store Phone: 630-715-5475

Our Farm Camp is all about cultivating JUNIOR FARMIVORES! Farmivore is our name for anyone who loves being at the farm, digging in the dirt and eating delicious locally grown food. Our Junior Farmivore program will introduce kids to life as an organic farmer. As our harvest season continues, the kids will witness the changes on the farm first hand. Each day will make the most of the weather and harvest conditions. Sign up for the days that suit your summer schedule best. **Camper reservations must be made at the store by the preceding Saturday.** There will be limited availability so please call now to sign up!

Sprouts

Ages 5 through 7 (4 year-olds may attend if accompanied by an adult.)

This program will be offered on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10:30 to 12:30.

This program will include : a walk through the gardens giving the children a chance to experience the smells and tastes of the weekly harvesting. Children will enjoy lessons on the good bugs and the bad bugs of the garden. The bad bugs get fed to the chickens! There will be a farm art projects and games. A farm snack and bottled water will be provided. All children must wear hats and sunscreen.

Price: \$12.50 for subscriber/\$15.00 for non subscriber

Junior Farmivores

Ages 8 through 13 (The program will vary for the 8 - 10 yrs. and for the 11- 13 yrs.)

This program offered:

Wednesdays from 1:30 to 4:30 in the afternoon, ending at the beginning of Wednesday subscriber pick-up. Campers need to have had lunch before coming to the farm.

This program will include : a farm art project and time spent in the gardens picking, watering, weeding, or maybe even vacuuming bugs! The campers will also create their own bug or bird guides documenting what they see on the farm. They will also be learning about beneficial insects and organic solutions to pest control. A farm snack and bottled water will be provided. All children must wear hats and sunscreen.

Price: \$18.50 for subscriber/\$20.00 for non subscriber